

1 CORINTHIANS

gospel formed future



OVERVIEW FOR PART 4:

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to Christianity. It is also central to all of human history and actually at the heart of the longing of every human soul.

We all will die. And every human heart wants to be assured, if we are honest, that death doesn't get the final say. We want life after death. And we don't just want this for ourselves, we want it for those we love. We want to be together again forever.

We were all made for eternity. We all long for resurrection.

The church Paul is writing this letter to struggled to believe in a literal bodily resurrection of the dead. They, like the culture around them, couldn't imagine dead bodies being raised up from the dead and given new life (all they could imagine was a Zombie Apocalypse – think Walking Dead). Besides, many of the philosophers of the day viewed the body as bad – like a dirty outfit that one should throw away.

But Paul points out, “if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.” He states it again emphatically, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

The gospel is the good news that God, in and through Jesus Christ, has come to rescue creation and humanity from sin, destruction and death. Paul clarifies that the good news was accomplished through Jesus' life, death, burial and resurrection.

Over the next couple of weeks we will examine how the resurrection of Jesus brings about the good news of God's rescue and renewal of all things.

PART 4: WEEK ONE - Resurrection Life

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

The first man, Adam, along with his wife Eve, were given physical bodies to live spiritual lives submitted to and dependent upon God. In those bodies they rebelled against God looking to define self apart from God and become autonomous rulers with the freedom to set their own rules about good and bad. As a result of their decision, sin entered into the line of humanity. Every human born since Adam was born broken and bent toward sin and destined to die as a result.

Jesus, is the second Adam, the first fruit of a new creation and the beginning of a new humanity. Just as through one man death entered the world, now through Jesus resurrection and new life was brought into the world. Jesus, in a physical body perfectly submitted to and obeyed God on our behalf. He died for our sins and was buried. He was raised from the dead in a physical body victoriously leaving death and sin in the grave.

As the first fruit of a new creation, Jesus is a picture of what we, who belong to Jesus, will also be like. When Jesus returns we will be raised with new resurrection bodies - bodies without sin, which will never suffer, get sick or die again. Jesus will also put an end to every power and authority that stands against life.

Everyone lives a life based upon what they actually believe will happen to their body and soul after life.

If you believe the body and soul both perish, then you will tend to live as though this life is all there is. This leads you toward hedonism (*eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die*) or self-preservationism (*in order to live a long life I need to do everything possible to avoid suffering or dying*). One is primarily obsessed with selfish pleasure, while the other is consumed with self-protection. Neither are free to live the abundant life of loving others and giving yourself away for the good of others.

Some believe the body will perish, but the soul will live on in a disembodied state. This view is dualistic or mystic. This view leads you to live as though the spirit is good and body is bad or that what you do in the body doesn't really matter after all. Unfortunately this leads to a disembodied faith - one which professes truth that does not actually transform everyday life. The tendency is to have Bible studies and attend worship gatherings but do nothing to practice faith in everyday life.

The Christian view that Paul affirms is that the body is both physical and spiritual in the sense that what we do in our bodies is a spiritual act of worship (Romans 12:1-2). The body and soul will both be saved in the resurrection. That is why we are willing to give our whole being, body and soul, to the work of God now. We know that what we do in our bodies really matters for eternity. The resurrection gives great meaning to every activity we engage in.

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

1. What does the resurrection tell you about God and what He has done?
2. Which of these three views do you believe is true? Which one represents how you actually live?
3. Where does your life presently display that you don't believe in the resurrection of body and soul?
4. If you fully embraced the resurrection of your body through faith in Jesus, what might change in your life?
5. How should our confidence in the resurrection affect how we treat one another? How should it affect how we treat those who don't yet know and believe in Jesus?
6. What will we commit to do together in light of the resurrection?